

<Articles>Grammatical Naturalization and a Mode of Extension(<Syntax>)

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journal or publication title	Tsukuba English Studies
volume	22
page range	273-278
year	2004-03-05
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/2241/7484

Grammatical Naturalization and a Mode of Extension

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1. Introduction

This paper concerns the analysis of Grammatical Naturalization from the viewpoint that embodies a mode of extension in linguistic description. Section 2 briefly surveys the phenomena I call Grammatical Naturalization, and Section 3 touches on what is meant by the mode of extension. Section 4 is devoted to the analysis of Grammatical Naturalization, and the concluding section follows it.

2. Grammatical Naturalization (GN)

In this section,¹ I will outline the phenomena of Grammatical Naturalization² (abbreviated as GN).

Most generally speaking, adjectives modify nouns both syntactically and semantically, as in (1):

- (1) a red flower

where *red* modifies *flower* both syntactically and semantically. However, there are cases where an adjective modifies the following noun syntactically but not semantically at all. Nakazawa (2001a) has pointed out such cases, which he called Grammatical Naturalization. Some of the typical examples of the phenomena are shown in (2)-(4). For the detailed illustration of this type of linguistic phenomena, see Nakazawa (2001a).

- (2) a. They drank a *quick* cup of tea.
 b. They quickly drank a cup of tea. (Nunberg et al. 1994: 500, n.14)
- (3) a. A neighborhood group locked *legal* horns with the Berkeley school district yesterday over renovations to a junior high school playing field.
 (Deborah Beccue, *The Daily Californian* Dec. 5, 1991)
 b. In the domain of legal matters, a neighborhood group locked horns with the Berkeley school district yesterday.
- (4) a. Sam kicked the *proverbial* bucket. (Chafe 1968: 124)
 b. Sam kicked the bucket in the proverbial way.

The italicized adjectives in the a-sentences of (2)-(4) do modify the following nouns, but they never function as the semantic modifiers of the following nouns. Semantically speaking, they rather modify the entire sentence or the verb phrase, acting as sentential/VP adverbials, as the paraphrases show; b-sentences being paraphrases of a-sentences. What is striking in these cases is that once the adverbial modifier is transformed into an adjective, this adjective climbs down into the syntactic object of the verb phrase and goes hand in hand with the head noun of the object NP, which means that this adjective mock-behaves as a modifier of the noun following it.

This is what we call Grammatical Naturalization, since this adjective, born outside the verb phrase, let alone the object NP of this verb phrase, has now settled in the new foreign land with no kinship around her at all. Notice that “to drink a cup of tea” in (2) is a free phrase, so it can be decomposed into syntactic and semantic components. Notice also that “to lock horns with (someone)” in (3) is a syntactically decomposable idiom, but its entire meaning is, some would say, decomposable; others would say, not decomposable. And notice finally that “to kick the bucket” in (4) is such a hard nut idiom that you cannot break it into syntactic pieces, nor can you into semantic pieces.³ GN, nevertheless, happens in each and every corner of the verb phrases in (2)-(4).

Nakazawa (2001a) has viewed GN in (3) and (4) as cases of syntactic extension from the basic GN of (2). Once GN has become a possible syntactic process in the syntactic free phrases as in (2), it will be extended to apply to the cases of syntactically decomposable idioms, like the one in (3), and even to the syntactically least decomposable idioms as in (4).

When put in the semantic perspective, GN is extremely exceptional in that the prenominal adjective has no semantic relationship to the following noun, but when put in the syntactic perspective, GN is not surprising. GN adjectives find their most comfortable place in front of the noun: this is nothing but a syntactic regularity. The example in (1) is the crudest instance of this regularity and the examples in (2)-(4) the sophisticated ones.

3. A Mode of Extension

Nakazawa (2002) assumes that there is a mode of extension that governs certain processes of linguistic phenomena. Nakazawa (2002) has argued that the entire phenomenon that he calls Epenthesis should be neatly analyzed in terms of the mode of extension shown below plus the logic about the description in linguistics.⁴

(5) A Mode of Extension

a. Type A

If an item *a* of the category *X* is in the structure *S*, then another item *b* of the same category *X* is in the structure *S*.

b. Type B

If an item *a* of the category *X* is in the structure *S*, then an item *b* of the category *X'* is in the structure *S*, where *b* in *X'* is the counterpart of *a* in *X*.

(Nakazawa 2002: 39)

The mode of extension in (5) embodies two subtypes, Types A and B. In the next section, we will see how GN is analyzed in terms of this mode of extension.

4. Analysis of GN

Let us first see how GN is formulated in the syntactic free phrases. Observe the phrases

in (6) and (7):

(6) a. [_{VP} visit occasionally]

b. [_{NP} Det A N]

(7) [_{NP} an occasional visitor]

Suppose that there is a situation such that someone visits somewhere occasionally. When the Act is phrased in the form of a verb, i.e. *visit*, the adverb *occasionally* modifies the verb as in (6a). The Theme or Actor of the action in this situation can be phrased in the nominal form as *visitor*, as in (7). In the nominal construction like (7), the adjective *occasional* modifies the Theme of this situation, i.e. *visitor*, which is due to the syntactic template of (6b). Notice that in (7) the prenominal adjective has a semantic relationship with the noun that follows it. The verb-adverbial modifier relationship in (6a) is suppressed in the adjective-noun structure of (7). This is the basic characterization of GN.

Now observe (8):

(8) a. A sailor strolled by occasionally.

b. An occasional sailor strolled by.

(Bolinger 1967: 5)

Type A of the mode of extension (5) applies here. If an adverbial modifier (*occasionally* in (6a)) of the verb (*visit* in (6a)) in a particular situation becomes an adjective (*occasional* in (7)) that modifies the nominal Theme (*visitor* in (7)) of this situation, then another adverbial modifier (*occasionally* in (8a)) of the verb (*stroll by* in (8a)) in another situation becomes an adjective (*occasional* in (8b)) that modifies the nominal Theme (*sailor* in (8b)) of that situation. Notice that GN adjective *occasional* in (8b) is obtained through the mode of (5) and it no longer has any semantic relationship with the noun that follows it, i.e. *sailor*, contrary to the basic case of GN in (7), where *occasional* has a semantic relationship with the noun that follow it, i.e. *visitor*.

Next, let us examine the case of (9), which is previously mentioned as (2):

(9) a. They quickly drank a cup of tea.

b. They drank a quick cup of tea.

In (9a) the adverbial modifier is *quickly*, and in (9b) it becomes a prenominal adjective of the Theme of this situation described in (9). Note that the adjective *quick* in this case is no way related in semantic terms to the following noun, *cup*, only this adjective-noun string observes the rigorous syntactic template in (6b). This is what the basic GN and the mode of (5) predict.

The mode of extension is operative in the case of syntactically decomposable idioms. Observe (3), which I will repeat as (10):

(10) a. In the domain of legal matters, a neighborhood group locked horns with the Berkeley school district.

b. A neighborhood group locked legal horns with the Berkeley school district.

In the situation where the idiom “lock horns with” is used as in (10), there is no real horns involved as a participant of this situation: in other words, there is no concrete object that is

purported to function as a Theme of the situation. So, Type B of the mode of extension is called for. If a Theme (*visitor* in (7)) of a particular situation has a prenominal adjective (*occasional* in (7)) that is derived from the adverbial phrase (*occasionally* in (6a)) of the sentence that describes the situation, then a Theme (*horns* in (10b)) of a figurative situation has a prenominal adjective (*legal* in (10b)) that is derived from the adverbial phrase (*in the domain of legal matters* in (10a)) of the sentence that describes this situation, where the Theme (*horns*) in this figurative situation in (10) is the counterpart of the Theme (*visitor*) of the concrete situation in (7).

The mode of extension is, furthermore, responsible for the GN in the most recalcitrant idioms, e.g. the case of “kick the bucket”. Observe (11), which previously appeared as (4):

- (11) a. Sam kicked the bucket in the proverbial way.
- b. Sam kicked the proverbial bucket.

In the situation described in (11), there is no concrete object that should be interpreted as the intended Theme. But, in the world of the ‘literal interpretation’ of the figurative idiom “kick the bucket,” the noun *bucket* functions as the Theme in the ‘literally interpreted’ situation of the idiom. So, the Theme *the bucket* in the figurative reading of (11) is the counterpart of the Theme *visitor* in the concrete reading of (7). Therefore, GN adjective is possible even in such a syntactically frozen idiom as “kick the bucket”.

5. Conclusion

GN is possible even in the most frozen idioms as in the examples of (11)=(4)), which fact has puzzled many idiom analysts, including Chafe (1968: 122-25), Nunberg et al. (1994: 508, n.19), O’Grady (1998: 286), Pulman (1993: 252-53), and Fellbaum (1993: 278-280), among others. But those examples can be systematically obtained by way of the mechanism that assumes a mode of extension. Therefore I believe that the mode of extension proposed in this paper, though crude in its formulation, has a sound empirical basis.

NOTES

¹ This section is a modified version of §5.2 of Nakazawa (2001b).

² The term “Grammatical Naturalization” is due to Nakazawa (2001a). The facts about GN are from the same source. Traditionally, the grammatically naturalized adjective that appears before the noun that it modifies is called Transferred Epithet. Transferred Epithets, however, include certain types of adjectives in addition to the grammatically naturalized adjectives. In Nakazawa (2001a), I have proposed that GN adjectives be derived from or related to the adverbial expressions, but not all Transferred Epithets are so derived or so related. Thus, observe the following examples and paraphrases:

- (i) the wicked wound thus given (= the wound thus wickedly given)
- (ii) Let us speak Our free hearts each to other. (= Let us speak Our hearts freely...) (*Macbeth* I. iii. 155)
- (iii) The whole ear of Denmark (= the ear of all Denmark) is rankly abused. (*Hamlet* I. v. 36)

(iv) In me thou see'st the twilight of such day As (= such a twilight of the day as) after sunset fadeth in the west. (*Sonnets* lxxiii. 5) (Examples and paraphrases in (i)-(iv) are from Ichikawa (1940, s.v. *Hypallage*)). In (i) and (ii), the adjectives *wicked* and *free* are Transferred Epithets that are derived from or related to the respective adverbial expressions in the paraphrases, so they are instances of GN, too. In (iii) and (iv), on the other hand, the adjectives *whole* and *such* are Transferred Epithets but they are derived from or related to the phrases that are not adverbial in the sense that I mean in (i) and (ii). So, Transferred Epithets encompass GN adjectives as a proper subset.

³ As to the syntactic and semantic decomposability, see some of the forerunners on idioms in the generative studies such as Fraser (1970), Newmeyer (1974), Bresnan (1982). Kajita (1974) and Nunberg et al. (1994) are helpful in understanding the Gordian knot state of the idiom structure, where syntax and semantics are intertwined.

⁴ The logic about the description in linguistics is roughly as follows:

- (i) The linguistic description for the phenomenon P should be an accumulation of the necessary conditions for P.

This paper leaves aside this issue on logic. So, for more on this subject, see Nakazawa (1997, 2001b, and 2002).

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